

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Madison 6

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

July 19, 1947

AIRMAIL

Mr. Joshua Lederberg
Osborn Botanical Laboratory
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Lederberg:

As Dr. Tatum will have told you, we are contemplating an appointment here in the genetics of microorganisms. You among others have been recommended for the position. Since the appointment is of major significance we are desirous of informing ourselves to the fullest possible extent concerning the qualifications of promising candidates before making a nomination to the Administration. We would like to know if the opportunity interests you and if so whether you would be willing to visit the University of Wisconsin for interviews with members of our staff. Absence from the campus at other times of some men with whom you would wish to confer indicates that the period August 20-23 would be the earliest suitable to us for the visit, or the beginning of September would be satisfactory. We would like to have you discuss informally some of your research before a group of graduate students and staff. An honorarium would be paid you for this in lieu of the travel expenses incurred.

Although microbiology is extensively developed in other directions at Wisconsin, the genetical work will be new. It is our hope to secure a man interested in fundamental research who will develop a core program in genetics and be willing to cooperate with microbiologists in other departments whose problems touch on this field. The genetical point of view, as you know, is just now gaining way in microbiology so that the help of a specialist in this field is certain to be sought sooner or later by some of our bacteriologists, biochemists, and animal and plant pathologists. It is important, in our judgment, that the new man at Wisconsin be ready to give his aid to other staff members seeking it even though the problems involved may not be of central interest for genetics. The position should provide ample opportunity for independent research along genetical lines chosen by the investigator himself but it is our hope that the incumbent also can develop mutually helpful relationships with colleagues in allied fields.

The appointment will probably be as assistant professor at a salary of \$3500 for the academic year (9 months). It has been common policy for the Experiment Station to provide opportunity for summer employment in research also. The additional compensation is 15% of the academic year salary. Operating funds from regular University sources will be provided for the work and the University Research Committee is always on the lookout for established lines of research that appear worthy of added support from the special funds which they administer as grants-in-aid. Our greatest current handicap is laboratory space and facilities. This fall, however, the elementary genetics

laboratory work is being moved from the Genetics Building to one of the "temporary" structures recently erected on the campus. It is planned to equip a laboratory for the new work in a part of the space thus released. The rate at which construction and delivery of furniture and apparatus is now proceeding gives little promise, however, that the new laboratory will be in operating condition before 10-12 months. Until a new laboratory is ready the opportunity for work on the genetics of microorganisms here is distinctly limited.

The position is being thought of primarily in terms of research. If and when a demand should arise for formal instruction in the field, however, it is expected that the new man would undertake to provide it. Meanwhile the new appointee's aid in our advanced genetics courses under Dr. Irwin's direction, and participated in by several of us, would be welcomed. Research interests in the Genetics Department here are fairly diverse, comprising work in both the animal and plant fields. Since we are a part of the College of Agriculture our applied interests are mainly in animal and plant breeding. The introductory genetics course is offered jointly with the Department of Zoology (College of Letters and Science) and, at the graduate level particularly, there is rather free intercourse between the colleges. Currently, the Department of Genetics has no work in progress cooperatively with the Medical School but I know of nothing in particular which would hinder such a development if it seemed desirable. Our first consideration in connection with the contemplated appointment is to strengthen our position in basic genetic research. The implications of genetics for various types of investigations with the higher animals and plants are fairly widely recognized within the institution. It is our hope that the new venture with microorganisms can be at least as successfully developed.

Looking forward to your reply, I am

Sincerely yours,



R. A. Brink
Professor of Genetics

RAB/s